

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Additional Budget Estimates 2013-14
27 February 2014

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

TOPIC: Public Debt Interest

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Bushby

QUESTION No.: AI-103

1. According to MYEFO the net interest payments for debt held by the General Government Sector for the current financial year total \$8.8 billion, while the total interest cost is \$12.4 billion. Both figures rise to be \$12.8 billion and \$16.7 billion respectively in the final out-year. What would the Government be able to do with the equivalent amount of money in this portfolio if these billions were spent on programs and outcomes instead of on debt?
2. Does your agency ever observe connection between performance management of staff and claims of stress leave or other forms of sick leave?
3. What is the number of staff on stress leave or psychological injury claims at any one time in your agency? How many harassment claims are there at any one time? How many of these cases are connected to performance cases? Have you observed any instances of stress claims and harassment claims being a tactic used by staff which the agency tries to performance-manage?
4. Looking at the length of time claimed for sick leave, are you seeing longer absences for people with physical injuries or people claiming to have psychological injuries? What's the degree of difference?
5. How much would be saved from your workforce insurance costs if you did not have the current levels of stress-related claims and other psychological injury claims?

ANSWER

1. These would be a consideration and decision for the Government.
2. Yes.
3. As at 28 February 2014 there are 10 employees with claims for accepted compensable psychological injuries.

There is one formal, open complaint of bullying and harassment. This complaint is connected to a performance management process.

60% of the compensation claims for psychological injury have been submitted by an employee whose performance is being closely managed.

4. To provide this level of detail would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.
5. Questions with regard to premium reductions are not able to be answered by the Department and should be referred to Comcare.